

## UPDATE FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF EARLY LEARNING SPRING 2010

---



DEL is moving forward with partners to help ensure all children in Washington and their families have quality early learning opportunities that prepare them for school and life. Among our current key initiatives:

**Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program:** More than 8,000 children are enrolled in ECEAP this school year, getting quality preschool, health and nutrition services, and family support services. With the passage of House Bill 2371 in 2010, we are working on a plan for moving toward accessibility for all eligible children by school year 2018-2019. Senate Bill 6759 also guides this work by creating a workgroup to examine preschool delivery (entitlement or basic education), current ECEAP program standards, and an implementation timeline.

**Washington Kindergarten Readiness Inventory of Developing Skills pilot:** DEL and OSPI will be piloting a kindergarten readiness assessment process around the state during school year 2010-2011. Interested school districts are applying now. We are planning to test various assessment tools and processes, so that we can report back to the Governor and Legislature with recommendations for next steps. The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and Thrive by Five Washington have matched the public state dollars with private dollars, as required in the budget language. ([www.del.wa.gov/development/kindergarten](http://www.del.wa.gov/development/kindergarten))

**Infant Toddler Early Intervention Program/Early Support for Infants and Toddlers:** DEL is excited to welcome ESIT to our agency on July 1, thanks to Senate Bill 6593. This program offers early intervention services to more than 4,500 children at any time. Children with disabilities or developmental delays are, first and foremost, children! This program belongs at DEL, and we are working hard to ensure a smooth transition for ESIT staff, service providers and families.

**Birth to 3 plan:** DEL is working on a plan to better support quality infant and toddler care and services in our state. We are redeploying federal Child Care Development Fund dollars targeted for infant and toddler quality improvement to create a regionalized system of services for families and early learning professionals (child care consultation, mental health, literacy programs, family, friend and neighbor caregiver support, etc.) This ties to House Bill 2867, which calls for a plan by December 1 to develop a continuum of service and support for children birth to 3. ([www.del.wa.gov/partnerships/infant/Default.aspx](http://www.del.wa.gov/partnerships/infant/Default.aspx))

**Early Learning Plan:** DEL's founding legislation calls for us to work with our Early Learning Advisory Council to create an early learning plan. A draft plan based on input from 40 organizations and hundreds of individuals is now out for public comment. Once adopted this fall, it will serve as the "roadmap" for building a statewide early learning system for children and families birth to third grade. ([www.del.wa.gov/plan](http://www.del.wa.gov/plan))



**Seeds to Success:** Our quality rating and improvement system is entering the second year of the field test. We are making some changes to the model to reflect what we have learned so far, and we also will be doing a ratings project in the second year of the field test. DEL and Thrive by Five Washington are partnering on this in five communities around the state. ([www.del.wa.gov/seeds](http://www.del.wa.gov/seeds))

**Professional Development Consortium:** DEL is leading a group of early learning experts and stakeholders in developing a clear, comprehensive professional development system for those who work with children in Washington. This comprehensive system will:

- Help ensure there are training and education opportunities available to help early care and education professionals offer high-quality early learning programs, and help ensure that professionals know *how* to access those opportunities.
- Offer clear guidelines on the competencies expected for early care and education professionals, including providers, teachers, directors and administrators.
- Offer supports and resources to early care and education professionals such as coaches and mentors and scholarship opportunities.

([www.del.wa.gov/partnerships/development/consortium.aspx](http://www.del.wa.gov/partnerships/development/consortium.aspx))

**Child care licensing and monitoring:** DEL licenses and monitors more than 7,600 child care facilities around the state: centers, family homes and school-age programs. We are launching a "licensing reboot," the purpose of which is ensuring that:

- licensed child care is safe, healthy and nurturing
- we have better communication with and input-gathering from licensed providers to inform our rules, policies and practice.
- our licensing staff have the tools, training and resources they need to do their job well, and that clear performance expectations are set and met.

(more information will be posted soon on [www.del.wa.gov/reboot](http://www.del.wa.gov/reboot))